Met Office

NEWS

Almost half of people caught out by severe weather

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With the clocks going back this weekend, new Met Office research shows that almost half of people in the UK have been caught out unexpectedly by severe weather over the past year.

The biggest cause of disruption was revealed to be heavy rain stopping people getting to work on time or going out, with more than a third (36%) of those surveyed affected. Issues with public transport, slipping on ice, and power cuts have also impacted almost one in five people.

Last weekend, the Met Office issued Amber and Yellow weather warnings as Storm Ashley hit parts of the UK. Flights and trains were cancelled and thousands were left without power, reminding us of the disruption that can be caused by severe weather in the UK.

Today, the Met Office launches its 'WeatherReady' winter campaign with the publication of survey results which make clear the potential impacts of winter weather. Supported by Cabinet Office, WeatherReady brings together expert advice on travel, protecting property and looking after health and wellbeing to help people stay prepared for any weather.

Met Office Head of Situational Awareness Will Lang, who leads responses in times of severe weather, said: "While it's too early to give a forecast for the whole of the winter ahead, we want to help individuals, families and communities prepare for, and cope with, severe weather. WeatherReady reminds us all to think ahead and consider how we might be impacted by severe weather."

Although the research shows that almost half of those surveyed (48%) check the latest weather forecast before making plans, Will says that's only part of being prepared.

"Checking the latest forecast and knowing what the weather is likely to do is a key part of being prepared, but it's also really important to know 'how' to take action if needed. For example, knowing how to shut off your electricity or gas supply quickly, having a first aid kit to hand, or preparing a list of useful contact numbers, could all help minimise impact and disruption.

"We want to empower people and communities to think ahead and take control of how the weather impacts them. The Met Office's WeatherReady advice pages bring together lots of helpful advice from our expert partners so that people know exactly what they can do to prepare ahead of impactful weather."

Checking on vulnerable people

The survey of people from around the UK, also revealed that just 18% checked up on vulnerable people they know in anticipation of severe weather. Will Lang said: "Severe weather can impact us all, but it's important to remember that some are more vulnerable than others, especially the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

"Ahead of severe weather, we'd encourage everyone to check on people they know could be vulnerable and help them take steps to keep safe this winter."

What bothers people the most about winter weather?

When asked what aspect of the UK's winter weather bothers people the most, half (50%) said how cold it gets, and a third (34%) how unpredictable the weather is.

Although we can't do anything about the temperature, people can mitigate the unpredictability of mother nature by keeping up-to-date with the very latest expert information, by checking the Met Office App, which is used by more than 6.3million people and features hourly forecasts as well as interactive maps. In-depth forecasts and explanations on the current weather are also available on the Met Office YouTube channel.

Strong winds and storms also bothered more than a third of people (39%). With 12 storms named in the last storm season, eyes will be peeled on how many impactful storms reach the UK in the coming months.

Winter Wellbeing

We all know that getting outside is good for our mental health, so it's not surprising that 32% of those surveyed said that not being able to go outside as much in winter bothered them most.

And with ‘crisp blue skies’ revealed as people’s favourite winter weather, the Met Office is keen to encourage people to explore the great outdoors and make the most of the season. There’s advice and information from expert partners on our WeatherReady pages about getting outside safely, as well as a collection of DIY #WeatherHacks you can try at home.

Get started by checking out 10 things you should do now to prepare for winter weather or search #WeatherReady on social media.

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Are you WeatherReady?

Thinking ahead and preparing for what the weather may bring can make a real difference. Here is a simple checklist to prepare yourself, your vehicle and your home or business.

Have basic supplies to hand

- ☐ Key information and phone numbers
- ☐ Torch and spare batteries

Check your heating

- ☐ Boiler serviced
- ☐ If possible, heating at 18°C or more

Weatherproof your home and garden

- ☐ Check fences and roof tiles
- ☐ Clear guttering

Plumbing checks can save money

- ☐ Insulate pipes
- ☐ Find stop tap

Make alternative plans

- ☐ Check travel routes
- ☐ Consider childcare options

Check your vehicle is winter ready

- ☐ Screen wash, oil and coolant
- ☐ Pack winter car kit

Think of vulnerable neighbours

- ☐ Check on neighbours
- ☐ What can I do to help?

Make the most of the weather

- ☐ Check the forecast
- ☐ Suitable clothing and footwear

www.metoffice.gov.uk/WeatherReady

Are your friends, neighbours and community WeatherReady for the winter?

Help them prepare by sharing this checklist or join the conversation online #WeatherReady

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